

import medications from Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan and pass along the savings to their American customers. This approach would allow Americans to benefit from lower prices on their prescription drugs while still enabling them to use their local pharmacy. The bill also allows individual consumers to import prescription drugs for their own personal use.

One of the leading arguments against reimportation has been concerns over safety of the prescription drugs that are sold abroad. My colleagues and I have addressed this issue by providing strict safety measures in this legislation which are intended to guarantee that only safe, effective FDA-approved prescription drugs are imported. Such provisions would require pharmacies and drug wholesalers to register with the FDA and be subject to frequent, random inspections. It would allow only the importation of FDA-approved medicines with a "chain of custody" that can be traced all the way back to an FDA-inspected manufacturing plant. It would provide for the use of the anticounterfeiting technology to identify safe, legal imported medicines, as well as give the FDA resources and authority it needs to ensure the safety of imported drugs and to stop those that are unsafe.

It is very important that the bill this Congress takes up and passes will not only become law but also ensure that reimportation is actually allowed to occur. This bill ensures that by including features to prevent a drug company from blocking importation by making subtle changes to a drug, such as changing the color or the place of manufacture, so that it is no longer FDA approved.

It is about time that the Senate takes up this legislation and passes it. It has broad bipartisan support and has been subjected to intense discussion, review, and debate. We are now faced with health care costs nationwide that are spiraling out of control, and we need to take action to address this issue. Allowing the safe reimportation of prescription drugs is a step in the right direction. The majority of the American people support reimportation, and I hope the leadership of this body will listen to them and finally provide the relief our citizens need.

COMMISSION ON MEDICAID AND THE MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED

Mr. CHAFFEE. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator GORDON SMITH and others in the introduction of a bipartisan proposal that calls for the creation of a Commission on Medicaid and the Medically Underserved. This legislation recognizes the importance of assessing what aspects of the Medicaid program are working, which need reform, and how to improve service delivery and quality in the most cost effective manner possible. In this tight budget climate this bill highlights the need for a comprehensive assessment of the Medicaid program. The future of

Medicaid cannot be determined by cost alone.

This Medicaid commission would be charged with numerous duties, including reviewing and making recommendations on long-term goals of the program, populations served, financial sustainability, interaction with Medicare and the uninsured, and the quality of care provided. Medicaid is a critically important program that helps meet the health care needs of a diverse population. Namely it serves as a source of traditional insurance for poor children and some of their parents, it pays for an acute and long term care services for the elderly and disabled, wraps around coverage or assistance for low-income seniors and the disabled on Medicare, and serves as the primary source of funding for safety net providers serving Medicaid patients and the uninsured.

In recognition of the diverse population Medicaid serves, the Medicaid commission would be comprised of 23 members representing all the stakeholders in the Medicaid program. The commission has 1 year to hold public hearings, conduct evaluations and deliberations, and issue its report recommendations to the President, Congress and the public.

Like many of our Nation's governors, I agree that the Medicaid program needs a careful assessment with an eye toward reform that will make the program financially sustainable. At the same time, I recognize the importance of not fundamentally altering the structure of program without the deliberation necessary to preserve aspects of the program that are working. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Senator SMITH's legislation to help bring Medicaid into the 21st century with reforms driven by efficacy, and not simply the cost of the program.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF WEST KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I pay tribute and congratulate West Kentucky Community and Technical College, WKCTC, as one of the finalists for the prestigious Bellweather Award presented by the Community College Futures Assembly. Their recent recognition has given Kentucky reason to be proud.

As one of eight national finalists, WKCTC is recognized for its Realtime Captioning Technology program. This program, which was originally funded by a \$475,000 Congressional award, creates a distance-learning format designed to greater prepare individuals for the workplace, while also providing broadcast captioning for the hearing-impaired. With over 28 million deaf and hearing-impaired Americans nationwide, I am sure that you will join me in recognizing the importance of providing such a service.

The Bellweather award was established in 1995 as integral part of the Community College Futures Assembly. This assembly primarily focuses on cutting-edge, trend setting programs, which often run the risk of being replaced at larger colleges.

I hope that you will join me today in both recognizing and congratulating West Kentucky Community Technical College in their recent achievement. They serve as an example to the rest of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. I wish them continued success in their program.●

TRIBUTE TO ALISON NICHOLS, BRITTANY SALTIEL AND SARA SIEGAL

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I speak today to recognize three gifted students from the State of Illinois: Alison Nichols, Brittany Saltiel, and Sara Siegal, all students at Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, IL.

These three students created a National History Day project on the Mississippi Burning legal case. Alison, Brittany, and Sara's efforts to examine the circumstances of this case have led to not only a reopening of the case but also the overdue indictment of Edgar Ray Killen for the murder of three young civil rights activists: James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner.

As a former civil rights attorney and constitutional law lecturer, I know firsthand the importance of ensuring that justice and the principles of our Constitution are always upheld. I am proud to represent Alison, Brittany, and Sara in the Senate as they serve as a reminder of why all of us have committed our lives to public service.

These students have demonstrated their tremendous potential in scholarship and leadership in public affairs. They serve as shining examples for our Nation's young people of how a small group of committed individuals can truly change a community, nation, and the world. Alison, Brittany, and Sara deserve not only our congratulations; they deserve our gratitude for making this country stronger.●

GRADING THE STATES ON GUN SAFETY

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, last month the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, in partnership with the Million Mom March and a number of State gun safety groups, released its 8th Annual Report Card on State Gun Laws Protecting Children. I applaud the efforts of these organizations to keep the pressure on State and local legislators to enact sensible gun safety legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to review this report.

The Brady Campaign report assigns individual States a grade of A through F on seven types of laws that protect children from gun violence. "Extra credit" and "demerits" were also assigned for other State gun safety laws.